

# BYLAWS: LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

Santa Clara County

*The purpose of these bylaws is to describe how the Lived Experience Advisory Board (the "Board") functions. Bylaws outline the Board's purpose and operations, who may participate, and expectations of members and leaders.*

## MISSION

The Board is a leadership development community created and operated by individuals with current or past lived experience of homelessness. Members make recommendations for improvement and assist with implementation of programs and services. LEAB is a platform to evaluate and shift power from traditional systems of care to those with lived experience.

## COMMUNITY NORMS

- Regular check-ins
- Step up / step back
- Own your actions
- Assume best intentions
- Show compassion
- Be present
- Stay on track
- Respect each other's time
- Be prepared
- Hold each other accountable
- Gentle call-ins
- Don't yuck my yum
- Honor the sharing
- Strive for excellence
- Find your growing edge
- Celebrate each other
- Check on one another
- Stand together

## Structure: General Members, Leadership Positions, Subcommittees, Working Groups, and Non-Voting Members

### *General Voting Members:*

The Board will consist of 11 to 19 members who participate in membership meetings and can raise motions and take part in votes during at LEAB membership at large meetings. All LEAB members will be provided with appropriate technology hardware and software to support meaningful engagement in LEAB work.

Members are encouraged to commit to at least 15 months total. When possible, members are encouraged to stagger turnover of membership and allow time to recruit replacement members, in order to create continuity for the Board.

Position	Duties/Description:	Time Estimate
General Voting Member	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending monthly LEAB meetings</li> <li>• Reviewing any relevant materials in advance of the meeting to meaningfully contribute</li> </ul>	3-5 hours/month

### *Executive Committee Members:*

The LEAB currently has **six leadership titles/roles:** (1) Chair; (2) Secretary; (3) Treasurer; (4) Membership Chair; (5) Community Liaison; (6) Policy and Advocacy Chair.

The length of tenure for executive committee positions is two years and there are no limits for the number of terms you can run. For the Chair position in particular, the Chair can serve for up to two consecutive terms and may be voted back for additional non-consecutive terms in the future.

The purposes and scope of work for each is described in the table below.

Position	Duties/Description:	Time Estimate
Chair	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with secretary or support staff to set agendas,</li> <li>• Leading/facilitating Executive Committee meetings and LEAB at large meetings</li> <li>• Keeping the group on track in advancing its goals and plans.</li> </ul>	12 hours/month
Secretary	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking meeting minutes and distributing them to the group and/or storing them in designated place within 7 days after each meeting.</li> <li>• Tracking member attendance.</li> <li>• Potentially creating agendas for meetings, informed by chair.</li> </ul> <p>Note that meetings could be staffed by non-Board member support staff to cover these duties.</p>	5-8 hours/month
Treasurer	Responsible for:	5-8 hours/month

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinating with funders and monitoring and accessing the LEAB budget.</li> <li>• Researching funding opportunities and leading fundraising efforts</li> </ul>	
Membership Chair	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring Board size and initiating recruitment efforts when needed.</li> <li>• Reporting weekly to the Executive Committee about Board size and openings, membership requests, and member attendance.</li> <li>• Ensuring representation of a diversity of experiences and backgrounds as described in Board Bylaws.</li> <li>• Developing strategies to remove barriers to Board participation.</li> </ul>	5-8 hours/month
Community Liaisons (2)	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outbound community outreach to other organizations and persons currently</li> </ul>	5-8 hours/month

	<p>experiencing homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May attend CoC meetings (such as Coordinated Assessment Work Group meetings, Service Providers Network meetings, and Rapid Rehousing and Employment Initiatives meetings, Strategy 3 Community Plan to End Homelessness (CPEH) Steering Committee meetings) to seek out opportunities for proactive Board engagement.</li> </ul>	
Policy/Advocacy Chair	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading development of Board advocacy agenda and coordinating membership participation in community advocacy on homelessness and affordable housing issues.</li> <li>• Coordinating with Spotlight and looking out for good story topics and potential writers.</li> </ul>	5-8 hours/month

*Subcommittees and Work Groups:*

The Board recognizes multiple ways for members to initiate work and take action as part of the Board. Subcommittees are one way of doing this, and another way is to participate in other CoC

committees and working groups. For instances in which all members of the Board do not want or need to work on a particular issue, smaller groups can be created to work independently.

At any meeting, members may vote by majority to establish a Subcommittee on any topic that will further the work of the Board. Ad hoc Subcommittees, which are formed for a specific task or objective and dissolved after achieving their objective, are also encouraged to further the work.

Those who are part of Subcommittees should plan to report back to the Board at the next full meeting of the Board to update the group and get feedback and direction on their work.

Participation in subcommittees and working groups is voluntary, and members are free to join or leave subcommittees and working groups at any time as interest and capacity changes. However, members are asked to take into consideration project timelines in making decisions about participating in or leaving a subcommittee or working group.

Subcommittees:

The LEAB currently has two standing **subcommittees** - (1) Welcome Committee; and (2) Professional Development Committee. Each subcommittee should have a lead to oversee the work of the subcommittee. Subcommittees can convene on an as needed basis to move objectives forward. The purposes and scope of work for each is described in the table below.

Membership Type	Duties/Description:	Time Estimate
Welcome Subcommittee Member	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the Membership Chair make contact with new potential LEAB members and conducting an interview</li> <li>• Providing an onboarding packet of key resources for new members</li> <li>• Supporting the Membership chair with providing initial tutorials/orientations for tech hardware</li> </ul>	Varies, but on average no more 5-8 hours/month expected

	members receive (laptops, hotspots, etc.)	
Professional Development Subcommittee Member	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping identify trainings and other professional development opportunities for members in alignment with the LEAB’s personal and professional growth values.</li> <li>• Potentially developing a curriculum of core competency trainings.</li> </ul>	Varies, but on average no more than 5 hours/month expected (more for lead)

Work Groups:

The LEAB also has a number **project-based work groups** to carry out discrete work tasks (i.e., consulting projects). Each workgroup should identify a lead from among the members of the working group. Working groups should operate as long as needed to complete the project for which they were formed and may include participation from non-voting members or operate jointly with another internal group.

Membership Type	Duties/Description:	Time Estimate
Work group member	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in specific project based working group(s) coordinating and ensuring work moves forward.</li> </ul>	Time commitment will vary widely for each working group formed, since project scope will vary. LEAB members will have a better sense of the commitment required of a given working group before deciding whether to join (more for lead)

## *Non-Voting Members*

The LEAB is committed to creating opportunities for individuals to get involved at every level and recognizes the time commitment involved in participating as a full LEAB member.

Appreciating that individuals may not be ready for membership but may want to share in community and be engaged with the LEAB's efforts at a lighter level, individuals can join the LEAB as a non-voting member. LEAB will be conducting regular outreach to recruit non-voting members and will be capped at 19 members.

Non-voting members can:

- Attend LEAB membership meetings
- Participate in discussions at LEAB membership meetings;
- Help support working groups with one-off projects;
- Check out LEAB laptops and hotspots for temporary use.

Non-voting members will not make motions or participate in votes during meetings at large.

Non-voting members are not expected to attend all of the at large LEAB meetings.

## MEMBERSHIP

### *Diversity Mechanism*

In the interest of representing a broad range of opinions and proficiencies, and to bring voices to the table that might otherwise be left out, the Board will strive to include a person who represents each of the categories listed below. Even without achieving membership diversity across all categories, the Board may continue to function.

- Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Queer
- Transgender
- Parenting/Family
- Substance use experience
- Disabled
- Veteran status
- Immigrant experience
- "Dreamer"
- Former foster care
- Use of mental health services
- Use of Cold Weather Shelter Program or rotating church shelter
- Use of County/Office of Supportive Housing systems



- Youth or elderly
- Live in South County
- Live in North County
- Live in East County
- Currently experiencing homelessness
- Housed and connected to homeless services
- Jail/Prison/Reentry experience
- Gang affiliated, present or former

### *General Membership Eligibility*

To be eligible to serve on the Board, members identify themselves as having an experience of homelessness, past or present. This experience may have taken place in Santa Clara County or elsewhere, and the member does not need to have utilized services in Santa Clara County.

On an ongoing basis as membership spaces open up, new members will be chosen based on application for membership.

As applications are received, the Membership Chair/Welcome Committee will:

- Track membership applications;
- Assign a member of the Welcome Committee to make contact with each applicant and conduct an interview and information session;
- Add new membership votes to the Board agenda, once the applicant has attended two meetings;
- Provide application materials to the Board before each vote.

At the Board meeting:

- Current members will review any application materials;
- The applicant will introduce themselves to the membership;
- LEAB members will discuss the application with the applicant out of the room;
- A new member will be approved by majority votes of members present.

Approvals to fill open vacancies may not exceed the maximum number of 19 total members. If the Board votes that an applicant is not a good fit for full membership, the applicant can join as a non-voting member.

## *Election of Leaders*

In order to be a candidate for a vacant or soon-to-be-vacant leadership position, a member will be nominated as candidate. Any member can nominate another member, and members may self-nominate.

If only one candidate is nominated for a position, they need to receive a majority vote of members present in favor to be placed in the position. If more than one candidate is nominated for a position, then each voting member will cast a single vote; whichever candidate receives more votes will be placed in the position.

Candidates do not participate in the vote and must be out of room while voting takes place. Vote should be kept confidential among those present to preserve integrity of the vote.

## **PARTICIPATION**

### *Member Meetings*

Regular meetings will be held monthly or as established by chair. Subcommittees and any other subgroups may meet as frequently as desired.

### *Non-Member Attendance and Participation*

In order to keep open lines of communication, enhance collaboration, and support the Board's work, non-members may be invited to attend member meetings and participate in ways as allowed by Board members. For example, CoC representatives and staff may be asked to attend Board meetings for purposes of bringing information or opportunities to the Board.

## **QUORUM AND DECISION MAKING**

### *Quorum*

Quorum describes the number of members who need to be present for decisions to be made or activities to occur.

For a vote to be held, a majority (more than half) of existing members must be present. Remote attendance, such as calling in by phone, qualifies as being present for purposes of quorum and voting.

No quorum is needed to hold a meeting, but quorum is needed to make decisions affecting the whole group.

## *Majority Vote to Make Decisions*

Membership on the Board gives the right to vote. To bind the Board in any decision, a majority vote of those present and entitled to vote is needed. Note that this means a tie vote is not approved.

## *Voting Procedures*

Recognizing that discussions are as important as voting for collaboration, at points of decision the Board encourages respectful discussion and coming to a majority vote.

Any person may call for a vote on a matter that is being discussed in any way that effectively communicates with those present that a vote is taking place. No formal rules need be followed for voting to take place.

One method of discussion and voting that *may* be used, called “Robert’s Rules of Order,” uses motions and certain vocabulary in decision making. This method is described here as an option for Board members to use as one way to communicate during discussion and voting. Board members are welcome to use some form of the guidelines below but do not have to go by them.

- 1) One member states a desired outcome by making a motion, saying, “I move that...”
- 2) Another member can second the motion to agree, saying, “I second the motion.” If no one seconds the motion, no vote is taken at that time, though the motion and vote could be brought up again at another time.
- 3) If a member does second the motion, the co-chair or person leading the meeting makes space for discussion by saying, “It has been moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?”
- 4) During discussion, the person who made the motion is allowed to speak first. Then, everyone else is allowed to speak as well. Each person should be able to speak at least once, and the leader may alternate between those who are for and against the motion.
- 5) After discussion, the leader initiates voting by saying, “Those in favor of the motion that... say “I approve.” Those opposed say “I don’t approve.” Votes may be taken verbally or by show of hands.
- 6) After votes are counted, the leader announces either that the motion is passed or that it did not pass.

### *Conflict of Interest Policy*

Conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which decisions made in a person's official capacity may result in personal benefit or harm.

A member who has a conflict of interest should disclose the potential conflict to the other members and must abstain from participating in any vote or decision making that implicates the conflict.

### *Revising Bylaws*

These bylaws may be revised by Board members through vote to approve by majority of all current Board members. Bylaws should be reviewed and revised by Board members as desired, not less than once every two years.

### *Executive Committee Action*

The elected members of the Executive Committee will meet outside of full Board membership meetings to discuss and coordinate Board operations. The Executive Committee can take actions necessary to coordinate and move forward the work of the LEAB. Point persons/leads have the primary authority and responsibility for moving respective efforts forward and do not need to receive approval by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee before proceeding with the following actions:

- Forming new subcommittees and work groups;
- Requiring updates from Board members on ongoing work;
- Approving external presenters to attend Board membership meetings.

The Executive Committee can take further actions on behalf of the Board, but these following actions require approval by a two-thirds vote of Executive Committee members:

- Approving the Board budget;
- Negotiating and approving contracts for Board work;
- Making minor amendments to the Bylaws.

Amendments to the bylaws that would substantially alter the LEAB's mission, code of conduct, primary objectives, and/or broader operational processes—including but not limited to, scope of Executive Committee/membership authority, membership size, and membership removal must be approved by a membership at large Board vote.

Executive Committee must report at the next full Board meeting on any action they take. An Executive Committee action can be reversed by a majority vote of the Board (over 50%).

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### *Applicability*

This Code of Conduct applies when Board members are:

- Representing the Board with members of the community, partners, or the public;
- Participating in Board projects, meetings or activities;
- Attending Board meetings and events.

LEAB members take great pride in representing something bigger than themselves. The Board holds itself to a standard of excellence and expects members to honor the LEAB's mission and community norms. Members should strive to develop themselves professionally and personally. Out of respect and consideration for our fellow unhoused neighbors, peers, and colleagues, members should be prepared and organized, so they can be present and engaged when participating in meetings and activities. The LEAB meets members where they are in their journey and will provide the necessary support to enable members to show up meaningfully. However, members should clearly communicate when they are unable to follow through with commitments.

### *Antiracism Policy*

The Board is dedicated to advancing antiracism in all Board or Board sponsored activities. Antiracism is a collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas. Antiracist policies produce or sustain racial equity between racial groups. Antiracist ideas are those that suggest racial groups are equals in all their apparent differences – that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group. Antiracist ideas argue that racist policies are the cause of racial inequities.

All Board Members are understood to be in various stages of learning and applying antiracism, and will be expected to strive to that ideal. If a member(s) is believed to be promoting or applying racism, racist policies, or racist ideas, every effort should be made to respectfully identify this to the member(s) at issue by other member(s), and learning opportunities should be offered.

If the member(s) at issue continue to promote or apply racism, racist policies, or racist ideas or are unwilling to engage in opportunities for education, the Executive Committee will add an item to the next regular LEAB meeting agenda for LEAB discussion. Following a discussion of at least 2/3 of current LEAB membership, the below Removal policy may be enacted.

## *Zero Tolerance for Harassment Policy*

The Board is committed to a safe and respectful experience for all members at all Board and Board sponsored activities and will have Zero Tolerance for harassment of any kind.

The Board defines harassment as any unwanted physical or communication-based conduct that offends or humiliates the recipient, that interferes with their ability to participate and learn or leads to adverse participation-related consequences, and that any reasonable person ought to have known would be unwelcome. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, racial or sexual slurs, name calling, racist or sexist jokes, negative stereotyping, physical assault, bullying, threats, demeaning pictures, posters and graffiti, texts, emails or social media posts shared with the Board.

Harassment includes the following categories of behavior, whether the behavior occurs once or many times:

a) Discriminatory behavior

Discrimination refers to treating people differently, negatively, or adversely because of one or more of the following prohibited grounds of discrimination: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, or pardoned criminal conviction.

b) Personal harassment

Personal harassment includes objectionable conduct, comment, or display made on either a one-time or continuous basis that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment on the part of the recipient. It may or may not be linked to discriminatory behavior.

c) Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment refers to any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature, whether on a one-time basis or a series of incidents, that might reasonably be expected to cause offence or humiliation or that might reasonably be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment, an opportunity for training or promotion, receipt of services, or a contract.

Examples of behavior that can constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- o unwanted touching, patting or leering
- o sexual assault
- o inquiries or comments about a person's sex life
- o telephone calls with sexual overtones
- o gender-based insults or jokes causing embarrassment or humiliation
- o repeated unwanted social or sexual invitations
- o inappropriate or unwelcome focus/comments on a person's physical attributes or appearance

d) Bullying

Bullying consists of behavior to attack and diminish another by subjecting the recipient to unjustified criticism and trivial fault-finding, humiliating the recipient (especially in front of others), and/or ignoring, overruling, isolating and excluding the recipient.

f) Poisoned environment

A poisoned environment is characterized by an activity or behavior, not necessarily directed at anyone in particular, that creates a hostile or offensive environment. Examples of a poisoned environment include but are not limited to: graffiti, sexual, racial or religious insults or jokes, abusive treatment of a member, and the display of pornographic or other offensive material.

Perceived harassment by a LEAB member should be reported to the LEAB Executive Committee. When harassment is reported, the Executive Committee will add an item to the next regular LEAB meeting agenda for LEAB discussion. Following a discussion of at least 2/3 of current LEAB membership that determines harassment occurred, the below Removal policy may be enacted.

## *Grievance Policy*

The Board is dedicated to cultivating a safe and respectful environment for all members to participate and share in community. The LEAB has established a Peer Committee consisting of the Chair, Membership Chair, and a representative from Destination:Home as a channel for members to relay grievances and/or raise concerns about the behavior of another LEAB member.

This Peer Committee will have authority to oversee the grievance process and make recommendations for appropriate next steps. The grievance process will focus on the prevention of escalating conflicts and maximize the use of informal avenues to resolve disputes, whenever possible. The Peer Committee may additionally seek support from an external County mediator to assist with this process.

A Board member with a grievance may submit a Grievance Form to the Peer Committee. Upon receiving the concern, the Peer Committee will set a date for review of the grievance within 5 business days of receiving it.

The Peer Committee will then proceed to:

- 1) Gather more information around the incident/case raised. This step may include separate meetings with member(s) who filed the grievance and member(s) involved in the grievance.
- 2) Determine appropriate next steps and decide whether there is sufficient basis for a removal vote based on the LEAB's zero tolerance for harassment policy.
- 3) Bring the information to the LEAB and raise a motion for membership suspension or membership removal.

In the instance that there has been violence or a threat of violence, the Peer Committee can keep that person from attending the next meeting.

If one of the Peer Committee members is involved in the grievance, they will be replaced with someone else from the Executive Committee.

## REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF LEAB MEMBERS

### *General Voting Membership*

**Resignation:** If a member chooses to voluntarily resign from the Board, the member should provide notice to the other members as soon as possible in writing.

**Attendance-Based:** If a member misses three meetings in a row, then that missing member can be presumed to have resigned and be transitioned to a non-voting member. In this situation, a majority vote of members present can dismiss the missing member and make them a non-voting member. Before dismissing such a member, other members should attempt to get into contact with the individual and resolve the situation in a manner in line with the missing member's desired outcome if possible.

**Removal:** A member may be removed from the Board through vote to remove by 2/3 of all current Board members. The member at issue does not participate in the vote and must be out of the room while voting takes place.

### *Executive Committee Membership*

**Resignation:** If a leader chooses to voluntarily resign from the Executive Committee, the leader should provide notice to the other members as soon as possible in writing.

#### **Reasons for Removal:**

- An Executive Committee member misses three unexcused meetings in a row.
- An Executive Committee member is involved in behavioral misconduct.
- An Executive Committee member may be removed/demoted from their Executive Committee position for continued failure to fulfill their responsibilities as laid out in the "Duties and Responsibilities" section.

Before considering removal, other members should attempt to get into contact with the individual and resolve the situation.



**Removal:** Any Executive Committee member may raise the question of removal of another Executive Committee member, based on the reasons above. To place a removal vote on the Board agenda, a majority of the Executive Committee must agree.

An Executive Committee member may be removed from the Executive Committee through vote to remove by 2/3 of all current Board members. The member at issue does not participate in the vote and must be out of the room while voting takes place.

**Replacement:** When a member of the Executive Committee resigns or is removed before the end of their term, a replacement vote will be held within 30 days (at the next at large meeting). The Chair will provide advance notice of the replacement vote to Board membership, call for nominations, and hold the vote according to the process described above for "*Election of Leaders.*"